



A New Direction: Hope in the Heartland

In January, I had the honor of delivering the State of the State address, outlining where our state has been in the past few years and a vision for where we can go.

Our state faced challenges in recent years, but because we chose to face these challenges Kansas is smarter, safer, healthier and more prosperous. We're moving in a new direction and Kansans now have more tools to make the most of their own lives.

We took action to encourage job creation, and because of the countless achievements of individual employers, Kansas has experienced 21 straight months of job growth. I want to continue to encourage the creation of good jobs by eliminating the property tax on new business machinery and equipment.

We can also create a more prosperous state by building on the recent investment in our children's schools, and I've been consulting with legislative leaders on how we make this happen. But in addition to a great school, every Kansas child deserves someone he or she can look up to. That's why I've launched Kansas Mentors. Former K-State coach Bill Snyder will lead this effort to match caring adult role models with Kansas kids.

Our children cannot take advantage of life's opportunities if they're sick, however, which is why improving health care remains a priority. Tens of thousands of Kansas kids have received health coverage in recent years, and I want to add to this number by providing health coverage to every Kansas child from birth to age 5.

I also believe we can take steps to improve the safety of our children, and of all Kansans. We've seen fewer meth labs since the Legislature passed the Sheriff Matt Samuels Act, which puts cold pills behind the counter so meth makers can't get to them. I now want to focus our attention on repeat sex offenders by requiring them to wear electronic tracking devices which will allow law enforcement officers to track their movements.

These are all common-sense steps, which can help expand on the unprecedented opportunities we have before us today. I pledge to work every day to expand these opportunities for all Kansans, and I encourage you to remain an active citizen by making your voice heard as the Legislature considers these and other important issues.